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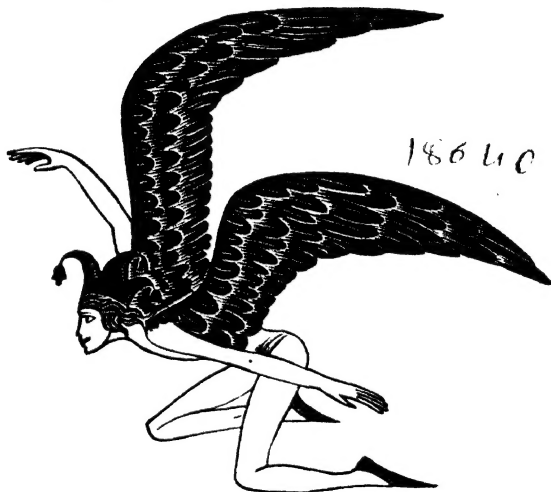
THE NEW TEMPLE SHAKESPEARE



Edited by M. R. Ridley, M.A.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare



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Editor's General Note

The Text. The editor has kept before him the aim of presenting to the modern reader the nearest possible approximation to what Shakespeare actually wrote. The text is therefore conservative, and is based on the earliest reliable printed text. But to avoid distraction (*a*) the spelling is modernised, and (*b*) a limited number of universally accepted emendations is admitted without comment. Where a Quarto text exists as well as the First Folio the passages which occur only in the Quarto are enclosed in square brackets [] and those which occur only in the Folio in brace brackets { }.

Scene Division. The rapid continuity of the Elizabethan curtainless production is lost by the 'traditional' scene divisions. Where there is an essential difference of place these scene divisions are retained. Where on the other hand the change of place is insignificant the scene division is indicated only by a space on the page. For ease of reference, however, the 'traditional' division is retained at the head of the page and in line numbering.

Notes. Passages on which there are notes are indicated by a † in the margin.

Punctuation adheres more closely than has been usual to the 'Elizabethan' punctuation of the early texts. It is often therefore more indicative of the way in which the lines were to be delivered than of their syntactical construction.

Glossaries are arranged on a somewhat novel principle, not alphabetically, but in the order in which the words or phrases occur. The editor is much indebted to Mr J. N. Bryson for his collaboration in the preparation of the glossaries.

Preface

The Text. There are two Quartos of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* of which the title-pages are as follows :—

(i.) *A / Midsommer nights / dreame. / As it hath beene sundry times pub- / lickely acted, by the Right honoura- / ble, the Lord Chamberlaine his / seruants. / Written by William Shakespeare. / Imprinted at London, / for Thomas Fisher, and are to / be sould at his shoppe, at the Signe of the / White Hart, / in Fleetestreete. 1600.*

(ii.) An edition with the same title, down to the author's name, and then '*Printed by James Roberts, 1600.*'

Until twenty-five years ago it was naturally enough accepted that in the same year two Quartos appeared; and controversy was hot as to which of the two was the superior text. But a piece of brilliant bibliographical detection—what might be called the Pollard-Greg-Niedig investigation¹—established beyond dispute that the 'Roberts' Quarto, in common with several others, was a fake, that it was not printed by Roberts but by Jaggard (who had taken over Roberts' business), was not printed in 1600 but in 1619, and was in fact printed from the Fisher Quarto, though with a few 'editorial' alterations.

The Folio was clearly set up from a copy of the 1619 (Roberts) Quarto, though pretty certainly not from a copy in the condition in which we have it, but from a copy which had been used in the Playhouse as a prompt copy. The details which make this supposition something more than likely are too intricate to enter into here, and all the details with regard to the text will be found fully dealt with in the New Cambridge edition.

¹ See *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, A. W. Pollard, 1909.

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The upshot is that for our purposes the only text that we need to trouble about is the 1600 (Fisher) Quarto. The text which follows is that of this Quarto with the exception of half a dozen or so emendations which have been universally accepted, and a certain amount of alteration in the punctuation. But the punctuation adheres much more closely than has been usual to the punctuation of the Quarto. The 'New Cambridge' editors seem to me to have been somewhat arbitrary in their views of the Quarto's punctuation, dismissing as they do the commas and full stops, but paying serious attention to the semicolons and colons. It is true that the Quarto is very heavily punctuated, very much more so, for example, than *Hamlet*. But it is not on the face of it likely that a compositor, who after all is a busy working man, is going to pepper his pages with commas, or any other mark of punctuation, merely for the fun of the thing. To him the insertion of marks of punctuation is merely so much more labour, and *prima facie* therefore there seems no reason why we should not pay as much attention to the compositor's commas as to any of his other marks of punctuation. And I think it will be found on comparing this text with the more usual texts that the punctuation of the Quarto very frequently produces interesting results. In a certain number of cases it makes a real difference to the sense; in more cases it makes a real difference in the emphasis which is thrown upon phrases by their becoming more isolated; and, perhaps most important of all, it greatly diversifies the rhythms.

In the Quarto there are no divisions into acts and scenes at all. In the Folio there are divisions into acts. There are few plays in which the ordinary divisions into acts and scenes are more vexatious and more destructive of the smoothly running effect which Shakespeare intended. Anyone who has seen any performance of *A*

PREFACE

Midsummer Night's Dream which reduced these divisions to a minimum, in particular one of the open-air performances in which continuity of action is more or less enforced, must surely have realised what a false impression of jerkiness is produced when the play is read in the usual text. In this text, therefore, the divisions are inserted only when there is an obvious change of scene. It is unfortunately necessary for purposes of reference to number the lines by scenes, and to indicate the scene divisions. But I hope that the space which is left where the traditional scene divisions occur, together with the "headline," and the break in the numbering of the lines, will be a sufficient, and so far as possible undistracting, indication.

Sources and Date of Composition. There are many plays of Shakespeare of which the sources are undoubted, and for the proper study of which an examination of the sources is illuminating and interesting. And there are plays also in which an exact determination of date is of some real significance. But any detailed examination of the rather dubious "sources" of so enchanting and light and lovely an entertainment as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is, I think, unnecessary and impertinent. It is probable that Shakespeare had in mind Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*; he probably drew on his recollection of North's *Plutarch's Life of Theseus*; and he would find the legend of Pyramus and Thisbe in the 4th Book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* either in the original or in Golding's translation of 1575. And any reader who wishes to pursue the question will find it admirably treated in *The Sources and Analogues of A Midsummer Night's Dream* compiled by Frank Sidgwick, London, 1908. But for the most part, surely Shakespeare was drawing upon his own imagination, and his recollections of the fairies of his native Warwickshire.

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The matter of the date of composition is of considerable academic interest, but of singularly little importance to an appreciation of the play. It is perhaps enough to say that the probabilities are that it was composed in 1592, worked over again in 1594, and put into its final shape (perhaps for the wedding of the Earl of Southampton to Elizabeth Vernon), in 1598. The evidence for this is again long and intricate, but any reader who has an ear for Shakespeare's different styles must be acutely aware of a wide difference between the more stilted deliverance of the lovers and such a passage, to take only one instance, as Theseus' famous speech on the lunatic, the lover, and the poet. There is every reason to suppose that the inconsistency in the descriptions of Puck, whether as Robin Goodfellow or Puck, are significant of the alterations. And these inconsistencies are retained in the text. For the detailed examination of the evidences of revision the reader must again be referred to the 'New Cambridge' edition.

Time of Action. There has been a great deal of discussion as to the duration of the action, the difficulties being all caused by the opening lines of the play, in which it is implied that the wedding celebrations are still four days distant, whereas when we come to read the play we find that we seem to be concerned only with the events of part of one day (Act I), the whole of the night of the following day in the wood, and the celebrations of the evening of the third day. There is of course also the further difficulty not only that the whole of the scenes in the wood are felt to be bathed in moonlight, whereas it has been implied that the moon is within two days of the end of her last quarter, but also that the mechanicals verify by calendar that they can have moonlight for their performance, even though this is to take place

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upon the very day when no moonlight at all is available. We may, of course, amuse ourselves with intricate suppositions that Shakespeare is playing here the same trick as he played with such brilliant success later in *Othello*, the trick namely which has been called the "double time scheme." But it seems to me much simpler to suppose that the inconsistencies, which are not of any serious distraction when one is reading or seeing the play, were the results either just of carelessness or even more probably the results of not too well dovetailed revision.

Criticism. This is the kind of play in which any detailed analysis or criticism is out of place, and liable to detract from the enjoyment. The existence of the three plots, the lovers', the mechanicals', and the fairies', is obvious enough, and the skill with which the three strands are interwoven is not only a delight to watch, but also indicates the advance which Shakespeare has made in his dramatic technique. A few criticisms are appended. It is perhaps just worth while suggesting, before we come to the play itself, that we only derive the enjoyment of the effect which Shakespeare intended if we get the three plots in their proper relative importance. It is perhaps inevitable that when we see the play in an ordinary theatre we tend to regard as the main plot the episodes of the ordinary human lovers, and so consider the fairies as merely delightful trimmings. One disadvantage of this attitude is that it concentrates attention upon the weakest and most immature part of the play ; and so to regard it is, I believe, entirely to misconceive Shakespeare's intentions. The world of the play is the world of the woods and the fairies ; they, for the purposes of this two hours' traffic, are the realities and not the fantasies. Into this world the lovers stray, as rather puzzled and bewildered

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phantoms. The other reality in the play is the homespuns, who, for all their amusing follies, have about them that solidity, that reality in three dimensions, which Shakespeare almost never denies to his working people, however much he may deny it to the Lysanders and Osrics and other paste-boards of the court.

Samuel Pepys, September 29, 1662.—To the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.

Thomas Campbell (Introductory Notice, 1838).—Addison says: 'When I look at the tombs of departed greatness every emotion of envy dies within me.' I have never been so sacrilegious as to envy Shakespeare, in the bad sense of the word, but if there can be such an emotion as *sinless envy*, I feel it towards him; and if I thought that the sight of his tombstone would kill so pleasant a feeling, I should keep out of the way of it. Of all his works, the *Midsummer Night's Dream* leaves the strongest impression on my mind that this miserable world must have, for once at least, contained a happy man. This play is so purely delicious, so little intermixed with the painful passions from which Poetry distils her sterner sweets, so fragrant with hilarity, so bland and yet so bold, that I cannot imagine Shakespeare's mind to have been in any other frame than that of healthful ecstasy when the sparks of inspiration thrilled through his brain in composing it.

Hartley Coleridge (Essays, etc., 1851, ii. 138).—I know not any play of Shakespeare's in which the language is so uniformly unexceptionable as this. It is all poetry, and sweeter poetry was never written. One defect there may be. Perhaps the distress of

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Hermia and Helena, arising from Puck's blundering application of Love-in-Idleness, is too serious, too real for so fantastic a source. Yet their altercation is so very, very beautiful, so girlish, so loveable that one cannot wish it away. The characters might be arranged by a chromatic scale, gradually shading from the thick-skinned Bottom and the rude mechanicals, the absolute old father, the proud and princely Theseus and his warrior bride, to the lusty, high-hearted wooers, and so to the sylph-like maidens, till the line melts away in Titania and her fairy train, who seem as they were made of the moonshine wherein they gambol.

Charles Cowden-Clarke (Shakespeare Characters, 1863).—What a rich set of fellows those 'mechanicals' are! and how individual are their several characteristics! Bully Bottom, the epitome of all the conceited donkeys that ever strutted or straddled on this stage of the world. In his own imagination equal to the performance of anything separately, and of all things collectively; the meddler, the director, the dictator. He is for dictating every movement, and directing everybody—when he is not helping himself. He is a choice arabesque impersonation of that colouring of conceit, which by the half-malice of the world has been said to tinge the disposition of actors as invariably as the rouge does their cheeks. . . .

The character of Bottom is well worthy of a close analysis, to notice in how extraordinary a manner Shakespeare has carried out all the concurring qualities to compound a thoroughly conceited man. Conceited people, moreover, being upon such amiable terms with themselves, are ordinarily good-natured, if not good-tempered. And so with Bottom; whether he carry an amendment or not, with his companions he is always placable; and if

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foiled, away he starts for some other point, nothing disturbs his equanimity. His temper and self-possession never desert him. . . . Combined with his amusing and harmless quality of conceit, the worthy Bottom displays no inconsiderable store of imagination in his intercourse with the little people of the fairy world. How pleasantly he falls in with their several natures and qualities; dismissing them one by one with a gracious speech, like a prince at his levee. . . .

Swinburne.—But in the final poem which concludes and crowns the first epoch of Shakespeare's work, the special graces and peculiar glories of each that went before are gathered together as in one garland 'of every hue and every scent.' The young genius of the master of all poets finds its consummation in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The blank verse is as full, sweet, and strong as the best of Biron's or Romeo's; the rhymed verse as clear, pure, and true as the simplest and truest melody of *Venus and Adonis* or *The Comedy of Errors*. But here each kind of excellence is equal throughout; there are here no purple patches on a gown of serge, but one seamless and imperial robe of a single dye. Of the lyric or the prosaic part, the counterchange of loves and laughers, of fancy fine as air and imagination high as heaven, what need can there be for any one to shame himself by the helpless attempt to say some word not utterly unworthy? Let it suffice us to accept this poem as the landmark of our first stage, and pause to look back from it on what lies behind us of partial or of perfect work.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, *Duke of Athens.*

EGEUS, *father to Hermia.*

LYSANDER, } *in love with Hermia.*
DEMETRIUS, }

PHILOSTRATE, *master of the revels to Theseus.*

QUINCE, *a carpenter.*

SNUG, *a joiner.*

BOTTOM, *a weaver.*

FLUTE, *a bellows-mender.*

SNOUT, *a tinker.*

STARVELING, *a tailor.*

HIPPOLYTA, *queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.*

HERMIA, *daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.*

HELENA, *in love with Demetrius.*

OSBERON, *king of the fairies.*

TITANIA, *queen of the fairies.*

PUCK, *or Robin Goodfellow.*

PEASEBLOSSOM, }
COBWEB, } *fairies.*
MOTH, }
MUSTARDSEED, }

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants
on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE : *Athens, and a wood near it.*

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Act First

SCENE I

Athens. The palace of Theseus

*Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, and
Attendants*

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace ; four happy days bring in
Another moon : but O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes ! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night ;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time ;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities. 10

The. Go, Philostrate, †
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments ;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth :
Turn melancholy forth to funerals ;

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The pale companion is not for our pomp.

Exit Philostrate

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries ;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter Egeus, Hermia, Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke ! 20

The. Thanks, good Egeus : what 's the news with thee ?

Ege. Full of vexation, come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander : and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child :
Thou, thou Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child :
Thou hast, by moonlight, at her window sung, 30
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy :
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats (messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth),
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,

To stubborn harshness : and, my gracious duke,
 Be it so she will not here, before your Grace,
 Consent to marry with Demetrius, 40
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens :
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her :
 Which shall be, either to this gentleman,
 Or to her death ; according to our law
 Immediately provided in that case.

Tbe. What say you, Hermia ? be advis'd, fair maid :
 To you your father should be as a god ;
 One that compos'd your beauties ; yea, and one
 To whom you are but as a form in wax,
 By him imprinted, and within his power, 50
 To leave the figure or disfigure it.
 Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Her. So is Lysander.

Tbe. In himself he is ;
 But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
 The other must be held the worthier.

Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

Tbe. Rather your eyes must with his judgement look.

Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
 I know not by what power I am made bold,
 Nor how it may concern my modesty, 60
 In such a presence, here to plead my thoughts ;

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But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

The. Either to die the death, or to abjure,
For ever, the society of men.

Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires,
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether (if you yield not to your father's choice)
You can endure the livery of a nun, 70
For aye to be in shady cloister, mew'd
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage ;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies, in single blessedness.

Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up 80
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

The. Take time to pause ; and, by the next new moon,
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship,
Upon that day either prepare to die,

For disobedience to your father's will,
 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would,
 Or on Diana's altar to protest,
 For aye, austerity and single life.

90

De. Relent, sweet ^{an}Hermia : and, Lysander, yield
 Thy crazed title to my certain right.

Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius ;
 Let me have Hermia's : do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander ! true, he hath my love ;
 And what is mine my love shall render him.
 And she is mine, and all my right of her
 I do estate unto Demetrius.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
 As well possess'd ; my love is more than his ; 100
 My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
 If not with vantage, as Demetrius' ;
 And (which is more than all these boasts can be)
 I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia :
 Why should not I then prosecute my right ?
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
 Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
 And won her soul ; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
 Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
 Upon this spotted and inconstant man. 110

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,

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And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof ;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come,
And come, Egeus ; you shall go with me ;
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will ;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up
(Which by no means we may extenuate) 120
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta : what cheer, my love ?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along :
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial, and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia

Lys. How now, my love ? why is your check so pale ?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast ?

Her. Belike for want of rain ; which I could well 130
Beteem them, from the tempest of my eyes.

Lys. Eh me ! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth ;
But either it was different in blood ;

Her. O cross ! too high to be enthrall'd to low.

Lys. Or else misgraffed, in respect of years ;

Her. O spite ! too old to be engag'd to young.

Lys. Or else, it stood upon the choice of friends ;

Iler. O hell, to choose love by another's eyes ! 140

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,

War, death, or sickness did lay seige to it,

Making it momentany as a sound,

Swift, as a shadow ; short, as any dream ;

Brief, as the lightning in the collied night,

That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth ;

And, ere a man hath power to say ' Behold ! '

The jaws of darkness do devour it up :

So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd, 150

It stands as an edict, in destiny :

Then let us teach our trial patience,

Because it is a customary cross,

As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,

Wishes, and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys. A good persuasion : therefore hear me, Hermia.

I have a widow aunt, a dowager,

Of great revenue, and she hath no child :

From Athens is her house remote, seven leagues ;

And she respects me as her only son. 160

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There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee ;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night ;
And in the wood, a league without the town
(Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May),
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander,
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head, †
By the simplicity of Venus' doves, 171
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
(In number more than ever women spoke),
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter Helena

Her. God speed fair Helena ! whither away ? 180

Hel. Call you me fair ? that fair again unsay.

Demetrius loves your fair : O happy fair !
Your eyes are lode-stars, and your tongue's sweet air

More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching : O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go ;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated, 190
The rest I'd give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look ; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart !

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill !

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move !

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine. 200

Hel. None, but your beauty : would that fault were mine !

Her. Take comfort : he no more shall see my face ;

Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,

Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me :

O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,

That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell !

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold :

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To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass, 210
Decking, with liquid pearl, the bladed grass,
(A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal),
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I,
Upon faint primrose-beds, were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet, †
There my Lysander and myself shall meet ;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies. †
Farewell, sweet playfellow : pray thou for us ; 220
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius !
Keep word, Lysander : we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. *Exit Hermia*

Helena, adieu :

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you ! *Exit*

Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be !
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that ? Demetrius thinks not so ;
He will not know what all but he do know :
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes, 230
So I, admiring of his qualities :
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,

Love can transpose to form and dignity :
 Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind ;
 And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind :
 Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste ;
 Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste :
 And therefore is Love said to be a child,
 Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd. '

As waggish boys in game themselves forswear, 240
 So the boy, Love, is perjur'd everywhere :
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
 He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine ;
 And when this hail some heat, from Hermia, felt,
 So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.
 I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight :
 Then to the wood will he, to-morrow night,
 Pursue her ; and for this intelligence
 If I have thanks, it is a dear expense : †
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain, 250
 To have his sight thither and back again. *Exit*

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

SCENE II

To gloss Bottom's blunders and 'derangements of epitaphs' is often impossible, and even where possible would only be distracting.

The same. Quince's house

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling

Qui. Is all our company here ?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Qui. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude, before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on ; then read the names of the actors ; and so grow to a point.

10

Qui. Marry, our play is the most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Qui. Answer, as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver ?

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Qui. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus ? a lover, or a tyrant ?

Qui. A lover that kills himself, most gallant, for love. 20

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it :
if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes ; I will
move storms ; I will condole, in some measure. To
the rest yet, my chief humour is for a tyrant : I
could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to
make all split ;

The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates ;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.

30

This was lofty. Now, name the rest of the players.
This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein ; a lover is more
condoling.

Qui. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender ?

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Qui. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

40

Flu. What is Thisby ? a wandering knight ?

Qui. It is the lady, that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman ; I have a beard
coming

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Qui. That's all one : you shall play it in a mask : and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too : I'll speak in a monstrous little voice ; thisne, thisne ; †
' Ah Pyramus, my lover dear, thy Thisby dear, and lady dear ! '

50

Qui. No, no ; you must play Pyramus : and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Qui. Robin Starveling, the tailor ?

Sat. Here, Peter Quince.

Qui. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother.
Tom Snout, the tinker ?

Sno. Here, Peter Quince.

Qui. You, Pyramus' father : myself, Thisby's father :
Snug, the joiner, you the lion's part : and I hope 60
here is a play fitted.

Snu. Have you the lion's part written ? pray you, if it be, give it me ; for I am slow of study.

Qui. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too : I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me ; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, ' Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

Qui. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright 70
the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek ;
and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if you should fright the ladies
out of their wits, they would have no more discretion
but to hang us : but I will aggravate my voice so,
that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove ; I
will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Qui. You can play no part but Pyramus ; for Pyramus is 80
a sweet-faced man ; a proper man as one shall see in
a summer's day ; a most lovely, gentleman-like man :
therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best
to play it in ?

Qui. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw colour beard,
your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard,
or your French crown colour beard, your perfect
yellow.

Qui. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all ; 90
and then you will play barefac'd. But, masters,
here are your parts, and I am to entreat you, request
you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night ;
and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

town, by moonlight ; there will we rehearse : for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the mean time, I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet ; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains ; be perfect : adieu.

Qui. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough ; hold, or cut bow-strings. *Exeunt* †

Act Second

Act Third

Act Fourth: SCENE I

The night of the next day

A wood near Athens

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and Robin Goodfellow

Rob. How now, spirit, whither wander you ?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,

Thorough bush, thorough brier,

Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire :

I do wander every where,
 Swifter than the moon's sphere ;
 And I serve the Fairy Queen,
 To dew her orbs upon the green.
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be, 10
 In their gold coats spots you see ;
 Those be rubies, fairy favours ;
 In those freckles live their savours.
 I must go seek some dewdrops here,
 And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
 Farewell, thou Lob of spirits ; I'll be gone :
 Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Rob. The king doth keep his revels here to-night :
 Take heed the queen come not within his sight ;
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath, 20
 Because that she, as her attendant, hath
 A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king ;
 She never had so sweet a changeling :
 And jealous Oberon would have the child
 Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild ;
 But she, perforce, withholds the loved boy,
 Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
 And now they never meet in grove or green
 By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
 But they do square, that all their elves, for fear, 30

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Creep into acorn cups, and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow : are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery ;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern, †
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn ;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm ;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, 40
You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
Are not you he ?

Rob. Thou speak'st aright ;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing, in likeness of a filly foal :
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab ;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her withered dewlap pour the ale. 50
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
And ' tailor ' cries, and falls into a cough ; †

And then the whole quire hold their hips, and laugh ;
 And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.
 But, room, faery ! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here, my mistress. Would that he were gone !

*Enter, from one side, Oberon, with his train ; from the
 other, Titania, with hers*

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania. 60

Tit. What, jealous Oberon ? Fairies, skip hence :
 I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton : am not I thy lord ?

Tit. Then I must be thy lady : but I know
 When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
 And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
 Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
 To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
 Come from the farthest steep of India ?
 But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon, 70
 Your buskin'd mistress, and your warrior love,
 To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
 To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
 Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
 Knowing I know thy love to Theseus ?
 Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

From Perigenia, whom he ravished ? †
And make him with fair Ægles break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa ? 80

Tit. These are the forgeries of jealousy :
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up, from the sea,
Contagious fogs ; which, falling in the land, 90
Hath every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents :
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted, ere his youth attain'd a beard :
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock,
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud ;
And the quaint mazes, in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable : 100
The human mortals want their winter here ; †
No night is now with hymn or carol blest :

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
 That rheumatic diseases do abound :
 And, thorough this distemperature, we see
 The seasons alter : hoary-headed frosts
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds 110
 Is, as in mockery, set : the spring, the summer,
 The childing autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries ; and the mazed world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which :
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension ;
 We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it then ; it lies in you :
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?
 I do but beg a little changeling boy, 120
 To be my henchman.

Tit. Set your heart at rest :
 The fairy land buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a votaress of my order :
 And in the spiced Indian air, by night,
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
 And sat, with me on Neptune's yellow sands

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Marking the embarked traders on the flood ;
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive,
And grow big-bellied, with the wanton wind ;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait 130
Following (her womb then rich with my young squire)
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die,
And, for her sake, do I rear up her boy ;
And, for her sake, I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

Tit. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round, 140
And see our moonlight revels, go with us ;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tit. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away !
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

Exit Titania with her train

Obe. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememb'rest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back, 150

Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
 That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
 And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
 To hear the sea-maid's music.

Pu. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw (but thou couldst not)
 Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
 Cupid, all arm'd : a certain aim he took
 At a fair vestal, throned by the west, †
 And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts : 160
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon :
 And the imperial votaress passed on,
 In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
 It fell upon a little western flower ;
 Before, milk-white ; now purple, with love's wound,
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
 Fetch me that flower ; the herb I shew'd thee once :
 The juice of it, on sleeping eye-lids laid, 170
 Will make or man or woman madly dote
 Upon the next live creature that it sees.
 Fetch me this herb ; and be thou here again
 Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Pu. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

Exit

Obe. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania, when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she, waking, looks upon,
(Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey, or on busy ape)
She shall pursue it with the soul of love :
And ere I take this charm from off her sight
(As I can take it with another herb)
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here ? I am invisible,
And I will overhear their conference.

180

Enter Demetrius, Helena following him

De. I love thee not ; therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander, and fair Hermia ?
The one I'll slay ; the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood ;
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

190

Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant ;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel : leave you your power to draw,

And I shall have no power to follow you.

De. Do I entice you ? do I speak you fair ?
Or rather do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not, nor I cannot love you ? 200

Hel. And even, for that, do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel ; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you :
Use me but as your spaniel ; spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me ; only give me leave
(Unworthy as I am) to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love
(And yet a place of high respect with me)
Than to be used as you use your dog ? 210

De. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit ;
For I am sick, when I do look on thee.

Hel. And I am sick, when I look not on you.

De. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not,
To trust the opportunity of night,
And the ill counsel of a desert place,
With the rich worth of your virginity.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege : for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore, I think, I am not in the night ; 220

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company.

For you, in my respect, are all the world :

Then how can it be said I am alone,

When all the world is here, to look on me ?

De. I'll run from thee, and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.

Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd : 230

Apollo flies and Daphne holds the chase ; †

The dove pursues the griffin ; the mild hind

Makes speed to catch the tiger ; bootless speed,

When cowardice pursues, and valour flies.

De. I will not stay thy questions ; let me go :

Or if thou follow me, do not believe

But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,

You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius !

Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex : 240

We cannot fight for love, as men may do ;

We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

Exit Dem.

I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,

To die upon the hand I love so well. *Exit*

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph : ere he do leave this grove,

Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter Puck

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Pu. Ay, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows ; 250

Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine :
There sleeps Titania, sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers, with dances and delight ;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in :

And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove :

A sweet Athenian lady is in love 260
With a disdainful youth ; anoint his eyes :

But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady : thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.

Effect it with some care ; that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love :
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Pu. Fear not, my lord : your servant shall do so.

Exeunt

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Enter Titania, with her train

Tit. Come, now a roundel, and a fairy song ;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence,
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
Some war with ere-mice for their leathern wings,
To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits ; sing me now asleep ;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

The Fairies sing

You spotted snakes, with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ; 10
Newts and blind-worms do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby,
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby :
Never harm,
Nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So good night, with lullaby.

First Fairy,

186410

Weaving spiders come not here ;
 Hence you long-legg'd spinners, hence !
 Beetles black approach not near ;
 Worm nor snail do no offence.

20

CHORUS

Philomel, with melody, &c.

Second Fairy

Hence, away ! now all is well :
 One aloof stand sentinel.

Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps

*Enter Oberon, and squeezes the flower on Titania's
 eyelids*

Obe. What thou seest, when thou dost wake,
 Do it for thy true-love take ;
 Love and languish for his sake.
 Be it ounce, or cat, or bear, 30
 Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
 In thy eye that shall appear,
 When thou wak'st, it is thy dear :
 Wake, when some vile thing is near. *Exit*

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Enter Lysander and Hermia

Lys. Fair love, you faint, with wandering in the wood ;

And to speak troth, I have forgot our way :

We 'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,

And tarry for the comfort of the day.

Her. Be 't so, Lysander : find you out a bed ;

For I upon this bank will rest my head.

40

Lys. One turf shall serve, as pillow, for us both ;

One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

Her. Nay, good Lysander ; for my sake, my dear,

Lie further off, yet ; do not lie so near.

Lys. O take the sense, sweet, of my innocence.

Love takes the meaning in love's conference.

I mean that my heart unto yours is knit,

So that but one heart we can make of it :

Two bosoms interchained with an oath ;

So then two bosoms, and a single troth.

50

Then, by your side, no bed-room me deny ;

For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

Her. Lysander riddles very prettily :

Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,

If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.

But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy,

Lie further off, in human modesty :

Such separation, as may well be said

Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
 So far be distant, and good night sweet friend : 60
 Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end !

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I ;
 And then end life, when I end loyalty !
 Here is my bed : sleep give thee all his rest !

Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd !

They sleep

Enter Puck

Pu. Through the forest have I gone,
 But Athenian found I none,
 On whose eyes I might approve
 This flower's force in stirring love.
 Night and silence. Who is here ? 70
 Weeds of Athens he doth wear :
 This is he, my master said,
 Despised the Athenian maid ;
 And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
 On the dank and dirty ground.
 Pretty soul, she durst not lie
 Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
 Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
 All the power this charm doth owe.
 When thou wak'st, let love forbid 80
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid :

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

So awake, when I am gone ;

For I must now to Oberon.

Exit

Enter Demetrius and Helena running

Hel. Stay though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

De. I charge thee hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me ? do not so.

De. Stay, on thy peril : I alone will go.

Exit

Hel. O, I am out of breath, in this fond chase !

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies ;

90

For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright ? Not with salt tears :

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear ;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear :

Therefore, no marvel, though Demetrius

Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne ?

But who is here ? Lysander, on the ground ?

100

Dead, or asleep ? I see no blood, no wound.

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

Lys. (awaking) And run through fire I will for thy sweet
sake.

Transparent Helena, nature shews art,

†

That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

Where is Demetrius ? O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword !

†

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander, say not so.

What though he love your Hermia ? Lord, what
though ?

Yet Hermia still loves you : then be content.

110

Lys. Content with Hermia ? No ; I do repent

The tedious minutes I with her have spent.

Not Hermia, but Helena I love :

Who will not change a raven for a dove ?

The will of man is by his reason sway'd :

And reason says you are the worthier maid.

Things growing are not ripe until their season :

So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason ;

And touching now the point of human skill,

Reason becomes the marshal to my will,

120

And leads me to your eyes ; where I o'erlook

Love's stories, written in love's richest book.

Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born ?

When, at your hands, did I deserve this scorn ?

Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,

That I did never, no, nor never can,

Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,

But you must flout my insufficiency ?

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo. 130

But fare you well : perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.

O, that a lady, of one man refus'd,
Should of another therefore be abus'd ! *Exit*

Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there,
And never mayst thou come Lysander near !
For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings :
Or as the heresies, that men do leave,
Are hated most of those they did deceive : 140

So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated ; but the most, of me !
And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen, and to be her knight ! *Exit*

Her. (awaking) Help me, Lysander, help me ! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast !
Ay me, for pity ! what a dream was here !
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear :
Methought a serpent ate my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey. 150
Lysander ! what, remov'd ? Lysander ! lord !
What, out of hearing ? gone ? no sound, no word ?
Alack, where are you ? speak, an if you hear ;

Speak, of all loves ! I swoon almost with fear.
 No ? then I well perceive you are not nigh :
 Either death, or you, I'll find immediately. *Exit*

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, and Starveling

Bot. Are we all met ?

Qui. Pat, pat ; and here's a marvellous convenient place
 for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage,
 this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house, and we will
 do it in action, as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince ?

Qui. What sayest thou, Bully Bottom ?

Bot. There are things in this comedy, of Pyramus and
 Thisby, that will never please. First, Pyramus
 must draw a sword, to kill himself ; which the ladies 10
 cannot abide. How answer you that ?

Sno. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Sta. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is
 done.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Bot. Not a whit : I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not kill'd indeed ; and for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver : this will put them 20 out of fear.

Qui. Well ; we will have such a prologue, and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more ; let it be written in eight and eight.

Sno. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion ?

Sia. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves, to bring in (God shield us) a lion among ladies, is a † most dreadful thing : for there is not a more fearful 30 wild-fowl than your lion living ; and we ought to look to 't.

Sno. Therefore, another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck, and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect ; 'Ladies,' or, 'Fair ladies, I would wish you,' or, 'I would request you,' or, 'I would entreat you, not to fear, not to tremble : my life for yours. If you

think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life : 40
no, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men
are ' : and there indeed, let him name his name, and
tell them plainly, he is Snug, the joiner.

Qui. Well ; it shall be so. But there is two hard things ;
that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber ; for,
you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Sno. Doth the moon shine, that night we play our play ?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar ! look in the almanac ; find
out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Qui. Yes ; it doth shine that night. 50

Bot. Why then, may you leave a casement of the great †
chamber window, where we play, open ; and the
moon may shine in at the casement.

Qui. Ay ; or else, one must come in, with a bush of
thorns, and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure,
or to present, the person of moonshine. Then,
there is another thing ; we must have a wall in the
great chamber ; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the
story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Sno. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, 60
Bottom ?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall : and let him
have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-
cast, about him, to signify wall ; and let him hold his

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

fingers thus ; and through that cranny shall Pyramus
and Thisby whisper.

Qui. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down every
mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus,
you begin : when you have spoken your speech,
enter into that brake, and so every one according to 70
his cue.

Enter Robin

Rob. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen ?
What, a play toward ? I'll be an auditor,
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Qui. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Bot. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet.

Qui. Odours, odorous.

Bot. —odours savours sweet :

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear, 80
But hark, a voice ! stay thou but here awhile,

And by and by I will to thee appear. *Exit*

Rob. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here. *Exit*

Flu. Must I speak now ?

Qui. Ay, marry, must you ; for you must understand he
goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to
come again.

Flu. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,

Of colour like the red rose, on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew, 90

As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Qui. 'Ninus' tomb,' man : why, you must not speak that
yet ; that you answer to Pyramus : you speak all
your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus, enter :
your cue is past, it is, ' never tire.'

Flu. O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter Robin, and Bottom with an ass's head.

Bot. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

Qui. O monstrous ! O strange ! we are haunted.

Pray masters fly masters ! Help ! 100

Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling

Rob. I'll follow you ; I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake,
through brier :

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,

A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire,
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and
burn,

Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.

Exit

Bot. Why do they run away ; this is a knavery of them to
make me afeard.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Re-enter Snout

Sno. O Bottom, thou art chang'd. What do I see on thee ? 110

Bot. What do you see ? you see an ass-head of your own do you ? *Exit Snout*

Re-enter Quince

Qui. Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee ! thou art translated.

Exit

Bot. I see their knavery : this is to make an ass of me, to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can : I will walk up and down here, and will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. *Sings*

The ousel cock, so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill, 120
The throstle, with his note so true,
The wren, with little quill ;

Tit. (awaking) What Angel wakes me from my flowery bed ?

Bot. (sings)

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray ;
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay ;—
for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a

bird ? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry 130
 'cuckoo' never so ?

Tit. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again :
 Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note ;
 So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape,
 And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
 On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for
 that : and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep
 little company together, now-a-days ; the more the
 pity that some honest neighbours will not make 140
 them friends. Nay, I can gleek, upon occasion.

Tit. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so neither : but if I had wit enough to get out
 of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own
 turn.

Tit. Out of this wood do not desire to go :
 Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
 I am a spirit, of no common rate :
 The summer still doth tend upon my state,
 And I do love thee : therefore go with me ; 150
 I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee ;
 And they shall fetch thee jewels, from the deep,
 And sing, while thou, on pressed flowers, dost sleep :
 And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

That thou shalt, like an airy spirit, go.
Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed !

Enter four Fairies

First Fai. Ready.

Second Fai. And I.

Third Fai. And I.

Fourth Fai. And I.

All. Where shall we go ?

Tit. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman,
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes,
Feed him with apricocks, and dewberries, 160
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries,
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers, crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise,
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes,
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

First Fai. Hail, mortal !

Second Fai. Hail ! 170

Third Fai. Hail !

Fourth Fai. Hail ! †

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily : I beseech
your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb : if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman ?

Pea. Peaseblossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your 180
mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir ?

Mu. Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well : that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house : I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed. 190

Tit. Come, wait upon him ; lead him to my bower.

The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye ;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my lover's tongue, bring him silently.

Exeunt

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Enter Oberon

Ob. I wonder if Titania be awaked ;
Then what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on, in extremity.

Enter Robin Goodfellow

Here comes my messenger.

How now, mad spirit ?

What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

Pa. My mistress with a monster is in love ;
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day :
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake :
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's noll I fixed on his head :
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
(Rising and cawing at the gun's report)

Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky,
 So, at his sight, away his fellows fly,
 And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls ; †
 He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
 Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
 Made senseless things begin to do them wrong ;
 For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch ;
 Some sleeves, some hats, from yielders all things catch.
 I led them on, in this distracted fear, 31
 And left sweet Pyramus translated there :
 When in that moment (so it came to pass)
 Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.

But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
 With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do ?

Rob. I took him sleeping (that is finish'd too)

And the Athenian woman by his side ;

That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd. 40

Enter Demetrius and Hermia

Obe. Stand close : this is the same Athenian.

Rob. This is the woman ; but not this the man.

De. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so ?

Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide ; but I should use thee worse,

For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day 50
As he to me : would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia ? I 'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd, and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him ;
So should a murderer look ; so dead, so grim.

De. So should the murder'd look, and so should I,
Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty :
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear, 60
As yonder Venus, in her glimmering sphere.

Her. What 's this to my Lysander ? where is he ?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me ?

De. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

Her. Out, dog ! out, cur ! thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then ?
Henceforth be never number'd among men.
O, once tell true ; tell true, even for my sake ;
Durst thou have look'd upon him, being awake ?
And hast thou kill'd him, sleeping ? O brave touch ! 70
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much ?

An adder did it ; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

De. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood :
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood ;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

De. An if I could, what should I get therefore ?

Her. A privilege, never to see me more :

And from thy hated presence part I so : 80
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. *Exit*

De. There is no following her in this fierce vein :
Here therefore, for a while, I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe ;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

Lies down and sleeps

Obe. What hast thou done ? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true love's sight :
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue 90
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

Rob. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find :

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear :
By some illusion see thou bring her here :
I'll charm his eyes, against she do appear.

Rob. I go, I go, look how I go, 100
Swifter than arrow, from the Tartar's bow. *Exit*

Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye ;
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter Puck

Pu. Captain of our fairy band, 110
Helena is here at hand,
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see ?
Lord, what fools these mortals be !
Obe. Stand aside : the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.
Pu. Then will two, at once, woo one ;
That must needs be sport alone ;

And those things do best please me 120
That befall preposterously.

Enter Lysander and Helena

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn ?

Scorn and derision never come in tears :
Look, when I vow, I weep ; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true ?

Hel. You do advance your cunning, more and more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish holy fray !
These vows are Hermia's : will you give her o'er ? 130
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh :
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh ; and both as light as tales.

Lys. I had no judgement, when to her I swore.

Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

Lys. Demetrius loves her ; and he loves not you.

De. (awaking) O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect divine,
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne ?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow ! 140
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow,
When thou hold'st up thy hand : O, let me kiss

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss !

Hel. O spite ! O hell ! I see you all are bent

To set against me, for your merriment :

If you were civil, and knew courtesy,

You would not do me thus much injury.

Can you not hate me, as I know you do,

But you must join in souls to mock me too ? 150

If you were men, as men you are in show,

You would not use a gentle lady so ;

To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,

When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.

You both are rivals, and love Hermia :

And now both rivals, to mock Helena :

A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,

To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes

With your derision ! None of noble sort

Would so offend a virgin, and extort 160

A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius ; be not so ;

For you love Hermia ; this you know I know :

And here, with all good will, with all my heart

In Hermia's love I yield you up my part ;

And yours of Helena to me bequeath ;

Whom I do love, and will do till my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

De. Lysander, keep thy Hermia ; I will none :
 If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone. 170
 My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
 And now to Helen is it home return'd,
 There to remain.

Lys. Helen, it is not so.

De. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
 Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
 Look, where thy love comes ; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter Hermia

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
 The ear more quick of apprehension makes ;
 Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
 It pays the hearing double recompence. 180
 Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found ;
 Mine ear, I think it, brought me to thy sound,
 But why, unkindly, didst thou leave me so ?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go ?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side ?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
 Fair Helena ; who more engilds the night
 Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
 Why seek'st thou me ? could not this make thee know,
 The hate I bare thee made me leave thee so ? 190

Her. You speak not as you think : it cannot be.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy !

Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia, most ungrateful maid,
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision ?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time 200
For parting us,—O, is all forgot ?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence ?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted ;
But yet an union in partition, 210
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem ;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart ; †
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men, in scorning your poor friend ?

It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly :
 Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it ;
 Though I alone do feel the injury.

Her. I am amazed at your words. †
 I scorn you not : it seems that you scorn me. 221

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
 To follow me, and praise my eyes and face ?
 And made your other love, Demetrius,
 (Who even but now did spurn me with his foot),
 To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
 Precious celestial ? Wherefore speaks he this
 To her he hates ? and wherefore doth Lysander
 Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
 And tender me, forsooth, affection, 230
 But by your setting on, by your consent ?
 What though I be not so in grace as you,
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
 But miserable most, to love unlov'd ?
 This you should pity rather than despise.

Her. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. Ay, do ; persevere, counterfeit sad looks ;
 Make mouths upon me, when I turn my back ;
 Wink each at other, hold the sweet jest up :
 This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled. 240
 If you have any pity, grace, or manners,

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well : 'tis partly my own fault ;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena ; hear my excuse,
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena !

Hel. O excellent !

Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

De. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat :
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak
prayers.

250

Helen, I love thee ; by my life, I do :
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

De. I say I love thee more than he can do.

Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

De. Quick, come !

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this ?

Lys. Away, you Ethiop !

De. No, no ; he 'll . . . †

Seem to break loose ; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not : you are a tame man, go !

Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr ! vile thing, let loose, 260
Or I will shake thee from me, like a serpent !

Her. Why are you grown so rude ? what change is this,
Sweet love ?

Lys. Thy love ? out, tawny Tartar, out !
Out, loathed medicine : O hated potion, hence !

Her. Do you not jest ?

Hel. Yes, sooth ; and so do you.

Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

De. I would I had your bond : for I perceive
A weak bond holds you : I'll not trust your word.

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead ?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so. 270

Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate ?
Hate me ; wherefore ? O me, what news, my love ?
Am not I Hermia ? are not you Lysander ?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me ; yet since night you left me :
Why then, you left me (O, the gods forbid)
In earnest, shall I say ?

Lys. Ay, by my life ;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt ;
Be certain ; nothing truer ; 'tis no jest 280
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

Her. O me, you juggler, you canker-blossom,
You thief of love ! what, have you come by night,

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And stolen my love's heart from him ?

Hel. Fine, i' faith !

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness ? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue ?
Fie, fie, you counterfeit, you puppet, you !

Her. Puppet ? why so ? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare 290
Between our statures, she hath urg'd her height,
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low ?
How low am I, thou painted maypole ? speak ;
How low am I ? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.

Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me : I was never curst ; 300
I have no gift at all in shrewishness ;
I am a right maid for my cowardice :
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

Her. Lower ? hark again !

Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me,

I evermore did love you, Hermia,
 Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you,
 Save that in love, unto Demetrius,
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood. 310
 He follow'd you ; for love, I follow'd him ;
 But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
 To strike me, spurn me ; nay, to kill me too :
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,
 To Athens will I bear my folly back,
 And follow you no further. Let me go.
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone : who is 't that hinders you ?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander ?

Hel. With Demetrius. 320

Lys. Be not afraid ; she shall not harm thee, Helena.

De. No, sir ; she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she is angry, she is keen and shrewd !

She was a vixen when she went to school ;

And though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. Little again ? nothing but low and little ?

Why will you suffer her to flout me thus ?

Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf ;

You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made ;

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

You bead, you acorn.

De. You are too officious 330

In her behalf that scorns your services.

Let her alone : speak not of Helena ;

Take not her part ; for, if thou dost intend

Never so little show of love to her,

Thou shalt aby it.

Lys. Now she holds me not ;

Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,

Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.

De. Follow ? nay, I'll go with thee, check by jowl.

Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you :

Nay, go not back.

Hel. I will not trust you, I, 340

Nor longer stay in your curst company.

Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray.

My legs are longer though, to run away. *Exit*

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. *Exit*

Obe. This is thy negligence : still thou mistak'st,

Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Pu. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.

Did not you tell me I should know the man

By the Athenian garments he had on ?

And so far blameless proves my enterprise, 350

That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes ;
 And so far am I glad it so did sort,
 As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight :

Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night,
 The starry welkin cover thou anon,
 With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
 And lead these testy rivals so astray,
 As one come not within another's way.

Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue ; 360

Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong ;
 And sometime rail thou like Demetrius ;
 And from each other look thou lead them thus ;
 Till o'er their brows, death-counterfeiting, sleep
 With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep :
 Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye ;
 Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
 To take from thence all error with his might,
 And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.

When they next wake, all this derision 370

Shall seem a dream, and fruitless vision ;
 And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
 With league whose date till death shall never end.
 Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
 I 'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy ;

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Pu. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste ;
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ; 380
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards : damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone, T
For fear lest day should look their shames upon ;
They wilfully themselves exil'd from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort :
I with the morning's love have oft made sport ;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread 390
Even till the eastern gate all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune, with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But notwithstanding, haste, make no delay :
We may effect this business yet ere day. *Exit*

Pu. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down :
I am fear'd in field and town :
Goblin, lead them up and down.

Here comes one.

400

Re-enter Lysander

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius ? speak thou now.

Rob. Here villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou ?

Lys. I will be with thee straight.

Rob. Follow me then

To plainer ground.

Exit Lysander, as following the voice

Re-enter Demetrius

De. Lysander, speak again :

Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled ?

Speak in some bush. Where dost thou hide thy head ?

Rob. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,

Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,

And wilt not come ? Come, recreant ; come, thou child ;

I'll whip thee with a rod : he is defil'd 410

That draws a sword on thee.

De. Yea, art thou there ?

Rob. Follow my voice : we'll try no manhood here.

Exeunt

Re-enter Lysander

Lys. He goes before me, and still dares me on :

When I come where he calls, then he is gone.

The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I :

I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly ;

That fallen am I in dark uneven way,

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And here will rest me. (*Lies down.*) Come, thou
gentle day !

For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. *Sleeps* 420

Re-enter Robin and Demetrius

Rob. Ho, ho, ho ! Coward, why com'st thou not ?

De. Abide me, if thou dar'st ; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now ?

Rob. Come hither : I am here.

De. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see :
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited. 430

Lies down and sleeps

Re-enter Helena

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours ; shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest :
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

Lies down and sleeps

Rob. Yet but three ? Come one more ;
 Two of both kinds makes up four.
 Here she comes, curst and sad :
 Cupid is a knavish lad, 440
 Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter Hermia

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
 Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers ;
 I can no further crawl, no further go ;
 My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
 Here will I rest me, till the break of day :
 Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray !
Lies down and sleeps

Rob. On the ground
 Sleep sound :
 I 'll apply 450
 To your eye,
 Gentle lover, remedy.

Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eyes

When thou wak'st,
 Thou tak'st
 True delight
 In the sight
 Of thy former lady's eye :
 And the country proverb known,

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

That every man should take his own,

In your waking shall be shown :

460

Jack shall have Jill ;

Nought shall go ill ;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be
well.

Exit

*Enter Titania and Bottom ; Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Mustard-
seed, and other Fairies attending ; Oberon behind unseen*

Tit. Come sit thee down upon this flowery bed,

While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,

And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,

And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where 's Peaseblossom ?

Pea. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where 's Mounsieur
Cobweb ?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your 10
 weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped
 humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good
 mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret
 yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and,
 good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break
 not; I would be loth to have you overflown with a
 honey-bag, signior. Where 's Mounsieur Mustard-
 seed?

Mu. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray 20
 you, leave your curtsy, good mounsieur. †

Mu. What 's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery
 Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, moun-
 sieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the
 face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but
 tickle me, I must scratch.

Tit. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let 's have 30
 the tongs and the bones.

Tit. Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your
 good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a
 bottle of hay; good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Tit. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried
peas.

But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me :
I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tit. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms. 40
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away.

Exeunt Fairies

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle †
Gently entwist ; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee ! how I dote on thee !

They sleep

Enter Robin Goodfellow

Obe. (advancing) Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this
sweet sight ?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity :
For, meeting her of late, behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her ; 50
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers ;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,

Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
 Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
 When I had, at my pleasure, taunted her,
 And she, in mild terms, begg'd my patience,
 I then did ask of her her changeling child ;
 Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent 60
 To bear him to my bower in fairy land.

And now I have the boy, I will undo
 This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
 And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
 From off the head of this Athenian swain ;
 That he, awaking when the other do,
 May all to Athens back again repair,
 And think no more of this night's accidents,
 But as the fierce vexation of a dream.

But first I will release the Fairy Queen. 70

Be as thou wast wont to be ;
 See as thou wast wont to see :
 Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
 Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.

Tit. My Oberon, what visions have I seen !

Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tit. How came these things to pass ?

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now !

Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head. 80

Titania, music call ; and strike more dead

Than common sleep of all these five the sense. †

Tit. Music, ho, music ; such as charmeth sleep !

Music, still

Rob. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes
peep.

Obe. Sound, music ! Come, my queen, take hands with
me,

And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.

Now thou and I are new in amity,

And will to-morrow midnight solemnly

Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,

And bless it to all fair prosperity : 90

There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be

Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Rob. Fairy king, attend, and mark :

I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,

Trip we after night's shade :

We the globe can compass soon,

Swifter than the wandering moon.

Tit. Come, my lord, and in our flight,

Tell me how it came this night, 100

That I sleeping here was found
 With these mortals on the ground. *Exeunt*
Horns winded within †

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and train

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester ;
 For now our observation is perform'd ;
 And since we have the vaward of the day,
 My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
 Uncouple, in the western valley, let them go :
 Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

Exit an Attendant

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
 And mark the musical confusion 110
 Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus, once,
 When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear,
 With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear
 Such gallant chiding ; for, besides the groves,
 The skies, the fountains, every region near
 Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind ;
 So flew'd, so sanded ; and their heads are hung 120
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd, like Thessalian bulls ;

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Slow in pursuit ; but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.
Judge when you hear. But, soft ! what nymphs are
these ?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep,
And this, Lysander, this Demetrius is,
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena. 130
I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early, to observe
The rite of May ; and, hearing our intent,
Came here, in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus, is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice ?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem.,

Hel., and Her., wake and start up

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past :
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now ? 140

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies :
How comes this gentle concord in the world,

That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity ?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking : but, as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here ;
But, as I think (for truly would I speak)
And now I do bethink me, so it is, 150
I came with Hermia hither : our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might
Without the peril of the Athenian law——

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord ; you have enough.
I beg the law, the law, upon his head :
They would have stolen away, they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me ;
You of your wife, and me of my consent ;
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

De. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth, 160
Of this their purpose hither to this wood,
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power
(But by some power it is) my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon ;

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object and the pleasure of mine eye, 170
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia :
But, like a sickness, did I loathe this food ;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met :
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will ;
For in the temple, by and by, with us, 180
These couples shall eternally be knit :
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away, with us, to Athens ! three and three,
We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta.

Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train

De. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks : 190
And I have found Demetrius, like a jewel,

Mine own, and not mine own.

De. [Are you sure
That we are awake ?] It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The Duke was here, and bid us follow him ?

Her. Yea, and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

De. Why then, we are awake : let 's follow him,
And by the way let us recount our dreams. *Exeunt*

Bot. (*awaking*) When my cue comes, call me, and I will 200
answer : my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-
ho ! Peter Quince ? Flute, the bellows-mender ?
Snout, the tinker ? Starveling ? God 's my life !
Stolen hence, and left me asleep ? I have had a most
rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of
man to say what dream it was : man is but an ass, if
he go about to expound this dream. Methought
I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I
was,—and methought I had,—but man is but a
patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought 210
I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of
man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste,
his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what
my dream was ; I will get Peter Quince to write

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

a ballad of this dream : it shall be called Bottom's Dream ; because it hath no bottom ; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play, before the Duke : peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. *Exit* †

SCENE II

Athens. Quince's house

The afternoon of the same day

Enter Quince, Flute, Snout, and Starveling

Qui. Have you sent to Bottom's house ? is he come home yet ?

Sta. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marr'd : it goes not forward, doth it ?

Qui. It is not possible. You have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens. 10

Qui. Yea, and the best person too ; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say ' paragon ' : a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter Snug

Snu. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom ! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life ; he could not have scap'd six- 20
pence a day : an the Duke had not given him six-
pence a day for playing Pyramus, I 'll be hang'd ; he
would have deserv'd it : sixpence a day, in Pyramus,
or nothing.

Enter Bottom

Bot. Where are these lads ? where are these hearts ?

Qui. Bottom ! O most courageous day ! O most happy hour !

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders : but ask me not what ; for if I tell you, I am not true Athenian. I will tell you every thing right as it fell out. 30

Qui. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath din'd. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps, meet presently at the palace, every man look o'er his part. For the short and the long is, our play is preferr'd. In any case let Thisby have clean

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

linen ; and let not him that plays the lion pare his
nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws.
And, most dear actors, eat no onions, nor garlic ; for 40
we are to utter sweet breath ; and I do not doubt
but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No
more words. Away, go away ! *Exeunt*

Act Fifth

SCENE I

Athens. The palace of Theseus

The evening of the same day

Enter Theseus, Hippolyta, Philostrate, Lords, and Attendants

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true : I never may believe

These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,

Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend

More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover, and the poet

Are of imagination all compact :

One sees more devils than vast hell can hold ;

That is the madman. The lover, all as frantic, 10

Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt.
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy, rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation, and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy ;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear !

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy ;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia, and Helena

**Joy, gentle friends, joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts !**

Lys. More than to us 30
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed !

The. Come now ; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Between our after-supper and bed-time ?
Where is our usual manager of mirth ?
What revels are in hand ? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour ?
Call Philostrate.

Phi. Here, mighty Thescus.

The. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening ?
What masque, what music ? How shall we beguile 40
The lazy time, if not with some delight ?

Phi. There is a brief how many sports are ripe :
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

Giving a paper

The. (reads) The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung †
By an Athenian eunuch, to the harp ?—
We 'll none of that : that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

(Reads) The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals, †
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage ?—
That is an old device ; and it was play'd 50
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

(Reads) The thrice three Muses, mourning for the †
death

Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary ?—
That is some satire keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

(*Reads*) A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
 And his love Thisby ; very tragical mirth ?—
 Merry, and tragical ? Tedious, and brief ?
 That is hot ice, and wondrous strange snow.
 How shall we find the concord of this discord ?

†
 60

Phi. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long ;
 Which is as brief as I have known a play :
 But by ten words, my lord, it is too long ;
 Which makes it tedious. For in all the play
 There is not one word apt, one player fitted :
 And tragical, my noble lord, it is ;
 For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
 Which when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,
 Made mine eyes water ; but more merry tears
 The passion of loud laughter never shed.

70

The. What are they that do play it ?

Phi. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
 Which never labour'd in their minds till now ;
 And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories
 With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phi. No, my noble lord ;
 It is not for you : I have heard it over,
 And it is nothing, nothing in the world ;
 Unless you can find sport in their intents,

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Extremely stretch'd, and conn'd with cruel pain, 80
To do you service.

The. I will hear that play.

For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go bring them in : and take your places, ladies.

Exit Philostrate

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd,
And duty, in his service, perishing.

The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake : 90
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.

Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes ;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears,
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome ;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue

Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
 In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter Philostrate

Phi. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.

The. Let him approach.

Enter the Prologue

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think, we come not to offend,
 But with good will. To show our simple skill, 110

That is the true beginning of our end.
 Consider then, we come but in despite.

We do not come, as minding to content you,
 Our true intent is. All for your delight,
 We are not here. That you should here repent you,
 The actors are at hand ; and, by their show,
 You shall know all, that you are like to know,

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt ; he
 knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord : it 120
 is not enough to speak ; but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath played on this prologue like a child
 on a recorder ; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain ; nothing im-
 pair'd, but all disorder'd. Who is next ?

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Enter Pyramus and Thisbe, Wall, Moonshine, and Lion

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show

But, wonder on, till truth make all things plain.

This man is Pyramus, if you would know ;

This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.

This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present 130

Wall, that vile wall, which did these lovers sunder ;

And through wall's chink, poor souls, they are
content

To whisper. At the which, let no man wonder.

This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth moonshine. For if you will know,

By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn

To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.

This grisly beast (which Lion hight by name)

The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,

Did scare away, or rather did affright ; 140

And as she fled, her mantle she did fall :

Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.

Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth, and tall,

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain :

Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,

He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast.

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,

His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,

Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,

At large discourse, while here they do remain. 150

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

De. No wonder, my lord : one lion may, when many
asses do. *Exeunt Lion, Thisbe, and Moonshine*

Wal. In this same interlude it doth befall,

That I, one Snout by name, present a wall :

And such a wall, as I would have you think

That had in it a crannied hole or chink :

Through which the lovers, Pyramus, and Thisby,

Did whisper often, very secretly.

This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone doth show, 160

That I am that same wall : the truth is so.

And this the cranny is, right and sinister,

Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better ?

De. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse,
my lord,

The. Pyramus draws near the wall : silence !

Re-enter Pyramus

Pyr. O grim-look'd night, O night, with hue so black,

O night, which ever art, when day is not :

O night, O night, alack, alack, alack, 170

I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot.

And thou O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,

Thi. And I, like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus, was so true.

Thi. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O kiss me, through the hole of this vile wall !

Thi. I kiss the wall's hole ; not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou, at Ninny's tomb, meet me straightway ? 200

Thi. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe

Wa. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so ;

And, being done, thus wall away doth go. *Exit*

The. Now is the moon used between the two neighbours. †

De. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful, to
hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best, in this kind, are but shadows ; and the
worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination, then ; and not theirs. 210

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of them-
selves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come
two noble beasts, in a man and a lion. †

Re-enter Lion and Moonshine

Lio. You ladies, you (whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor)
May now, perchance, both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough, in wildest rage, doth roar.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Then know that I, as Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam ;
For, if I should, as lion, come in strife, 220
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

De. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox, for his valour.

The. True ; and a goose for his discretion.

De. Not so, my lord ; for his valour cannot carry his
discretion ; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour ;
for the goose carries not the fox. It is well : leave
it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon. 230

Mo. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present ;—

De. He should have worn the horns, on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible, within
the circumference.

Mo. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present,
Myself, the man i' the moon, do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest : the man
should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the
man i' the moon ?

De. He dares not come there, for the candle ; for, you 240
see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon : would he would change !

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane ; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Mo. All that I have to say, is to tell you, that the lanthorn is the moon, I the man i' the moon, this thorn-bush my thorn-bush, and this dog my dog.

De. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn ; for all 250
these are in the moon. But silence ! here comes
Thisbe.

Re-enter Thisbe

Thi. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love ?

Lio. (*roaring*) Oh——

Thisbe runs off

De. Well roar'd, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a
good grace.

The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exits

The. Well mous'd, Lion.

De. And then came Pyramus.

260

Lys. And so the lion vanish'd.

Re-enter Pyramus

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee, for thy sunny beams.

I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so
bright ;

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

For, by thy gracious golden, glittering gleams,

I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.

But stay : O spite !

But mark, poor knight,

What dreadful dole is here ?

Eyes do you see !

How can it be !

270

O dainty duck, O dear !

Thy mantle good,

What, stain'd with blood ?

Approach ye Furies fell,

O Fates come, come,

Cut thread and thrum,

Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would
go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

280

Pyr. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame ?

Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear :

Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame

That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with
cheer.

Come, tears, confound,

Out sword, and wound

The pap of Pyramus ;

Ay, that left pap,
 Where heart doth hop : *Stabs himself*
 Thus die I, thus, thus, thus. 290

Now am I dead,
 Now am I fled,
 My soul is in the sky.
 Tongue lose thy light,
 Moon take thy flight, *Exit Moonshine*
 Now die, die, die, die. *Dies*

De. No die, but an ace for him ; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man ; for he is dead, he is nothing.

Tbe. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and
 yet prove an ass. 300

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before ? Thisbe
 comes back, and finds her lover.

Tbe. She will find him, by starlight. Here she comes,
 and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter Thisbe

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one, for such a
 Pyramus : I hope she will be brief.

De. A moth will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which
 Thisbe, is the better ; [he for a man, God warrant
 us ; she for a woman, God bless us.]

Lys. She hath spied him already, with those sweet eyes. 310

De. And thus she means, videlicet :—

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Thi. Asleep my love ?
What, dead my dove ?
O Pyramus, arise,
Speak, speak. Quite dumb ?
Dead, dead ? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks 320
Are gone, are gone :
Lovers make moan :
His eyes were green, as leeks.
O sisters three,
Come, come, to me,
With hands as pale as milk,
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears, his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word : 330
Come trusty sword,
Come blade, my breast imbrue : *Stabs herself*
And farewell friends :
Thus Thisby ends :
Adieu, adieu, adieu. *Dies*
The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

De. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. (*starting up*) No, I assure you, the wall is down, †
that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see
the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between 340
two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no
excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are
all dead, there need none to be blam'd. Marry, if
he that writ it had play'd Pyramus, and hang'd
himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a
fine tragedy: and so it is, truly, and very notably
discharg'd. But come, your Bergomask: let your
epilogue alone. *A dance*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve: 350
Lovers to bed, 'tis almost fairy time.

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels, and new jollity. *Exeunt*

Enter Puck

Pu. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores, 360
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night,
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide :
And we fairies, that do run 370
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic : not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house :
I am sent, with broom, before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter Oberon and Titania with their train

Obs. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire,
Every elf and fairy sprite, 380
Hop as light as bird from brier,
And this ditty, after me,

Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tit. First rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note :
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing and bless this place.

Obs. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house, each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we ;
Which by us shall blessed be ;
And the issue, there create,
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be ;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand.
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait,
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace,
Ever shall in safety rest,
And the owner of it blest.

390

400

†

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Trip away ; make no stay ;
Meet me all, by break of day,

Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train

Rob. If we shadows have offended, 410
Think but this (and all is mended),
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend :
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to scape the serpent's tongue, 420
We will make amends, ere long ;
Else, the Puck a liar call.
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. *Exit*

Notes

I. i. 11. '*Philostrate*' is the name assumed by Arcite in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*.

I. i. 170. *arrow with the golden head*; cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, i. 466. 'Tone causeth loue, the tother doth it slake. That causeth loue, is all of golde with point full sharpe and bright. That chaseth loue is blunt, whose steele with leaden head is dight.' (Golding's translation).

I. i. 216, 219. *sweet . . . stranger companies*; these two emendations of Theobald must be accepted if the rhymes of the passage are to be regularised: but it is a trifle suspicious that both Quartos and the Folio concur in *sweld* (i.e. swell'd) and *strange companions*.

I. i. 249. *dear expense*; i.e. I shall pay dearly (by giving him a sight of my rival) for his thanks and the pleasure of seeing him.

I. ii. 48. *thisne*; Q and F both read *Thisne*, as though it were an error for 'Thisby.' But Bottom gets it right two lines lower, and he would not in any case as Thisbe address himself. *Thissen* is a common dialect word for 'in this way'; and the N.E.D. recognises both 'this 'ne' and 'thisn' as variant spellings of it.

I. ii. 104. *hold, or cut bow-strings*; clearly a proverbial phrase, meaning, 'hold to the agreement at all costs'; but none of the explanations as to why it meant that are very convincing.

II. i. 36. *quern*; properly a hand-mill for corn; but its sudden introduction into the middle of dairy operations is odd, and one wonders whether it is not in fact some form of churn in which the dashes were worked by the same action as the stone of the hand-mill.

II. i. 54. '*tailor*' *cries*; Johnson thought he remembered the

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custom of crying 'tailor' at a sudden fall backwards. But his remembrance is unsupported, and the attempts at illumination have increased the gloom.

II. i. 78. *Perigenia, etc.*; the names all come from North's *Plutarch's Life of Theseus* (hence the spelling *Ægles* for *Ægle*); the parentage of Theseus' various lovers and the circumstances of their relations with him are here of small importance.

II. i. 101. *winter here*; it is generally agreed that *here* is corrupt. The best suggestion is perhaps *gear* (Brae).

II. i. 158. *throned by the west*; Q reads *by west*, and one cannot help wondering whether *throned* is right. As a description of the Queen it is suitable enough. But *by* is awkward; and line 163 (*passed on*) suggests movement, not enthronement.

158-72. This speech of Oberon's has caused infinite conjecture about it and about, and anyone who wishes to see what can happen to allegorising run crazy can refer to the sixteen pages of discrepant interpretations collected in Furness's Variorum edition. That the fair vestal is the Queen one can hardly doubt; and that there may be fuller topical allusions we cannot deny; but that there *must* be such allusions is an extravagant assertion. Shakespeare wanted to account for the strange power of the charm, and he does it in a flight of fancy. The general assumption that the little western flower must be another lady seems to me as gratuitous as it is inconvenient. If the passage were self-contained the allegorical interpretation would be easier; but this flower, as a charm, pervades the rest of the play in contexts where it cannot carry the allegorical meaning with it, and where any recollection of such a meaning is a distraction.

II. i. 231. *Daphne holds the chase*; Apollo pursued Daphne; she was saved by metamorphosis into a laurel.

II. ii. 104. It has been considered necessary by most editors, from Heminge and Condell downwards, to emend this line, on the ground that 'it clearly lacks a syllable.' But it does not. *Helena* is normally in this play a trisyllable (*cf.* I. i. 180; II. ii. 113), and when Shakespeare wanted the name as a disyllable he wrote it *Helen* (*cf.* II. ii. 144; III. ii. 136).

II. ii. 107. There is a dishonest conspiracy of silence amongst commentators as to why Demetrius' vile name is so fit a word; and even Furness has nothing better to offer than a gibe at a ponderous German, who at least had the honesty to admit that he was puzzled—though his suggestion of an allusion to meat on a spit is not felicitous.

III. i. 29-31. It is difficult not to see in this an allusion to the episode, noted by Malone, on Aug. 30, 1594, when before King James, on the occasion of the christening of Prince Henry of Scotland, a chariot was drawn in by a 'black-moore.' 'This chariot should have been drawne in by a lyon, but because his presence might have brought some feare to those nearest, or that the sight of the lights and the torches might have commoved his tameness, it was thought meete that the Moor should supply that room.'

III. i. 51. *Bot*; Q gives this speech to a mysterious *Cet*. Is this perhaps a misreading or mishearing of a marginal correction of *leave*; i.e. *set a casement . . . open*?

III. i. 172 *et sqq.* It is observable that Bottom has no greeting for Moth. It looks as though in a revision Shakespeare omitted one of his four fairies.

III. ii. 25. *at our stamp*; Johnson's emendation is very tempting, 'at a stump.'

III. ii. 212-214. "Helena says, 'we had two seeming bodies but one heart.' She then exemplifies her position by a simile—'we had

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two of the first, *i.e.* bodies, like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which, like our single heart, have but one crest.''' [Douce.]

This would be satisfactory enough if it were not that 'of the first' in a heraldic context must almost necessarily have a heraldic significance—and the usual heraldic meaning of 'the first,' *i.e.* the first colour mentioned, the 'field,' makes no sense. Staunton suggested that 'the first' here meant the first of the nine 'partitions' which divide a shield from top to bottom. This gives good sense.

III. ii. 220. *I am amazed at your words*; the line clearly halts. F inserts *passionate* before *words*. But any reader's own conjecture has as much authority as this facile padding.

III. ii. 257. *No, No; he'll . . .*; the passage is clearly corrupt; there have been many conjectures, none convincing. The easiest cure is to omit the three words as part of a false start which should have been cancelled.

III. ii. 384-7. The approval of an austere textual critic encourages me to promote, from the note in which it at first appeared, to the text of a second printing, an emendation. The original texts have semicolon after *gone*, and comma after *upon*; they also read *exile*. If we assume a 'transposed pointing' and an *e:d* confusion (two of the commonest errors) we have the text as it stands, which gives better balance and more emphatic point.

*Already to their wormy beds are gone,
For fear lest day should look their shames upon;
They wilfully themselves exil'd from light,
And must for aye consort with endless night.*

IV. i. 21. *leave your curtsy*; *i.e.* put on your hat: cf. Hamlet and Osric.

IV. i. 42. '*So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle*'; something is clearly wrong here, since woodbine and honeysuckle are the

same thing. The New Cambridge editors ingeniously demonstrate that the reading 'bindweed,' which has tempted many, is much more plausible than at first appears: *d:e*, and *e:o* errors are common: if therefore Shakespeare wrote *bind weed* the compositor, reading it as *bine wood*, would inevitably transpose.

IV. i. 82. This is the usual emendation of the F and Q reading, *and strike more dead than common sleepe: of all these, fine the sense*.

IV. i. 102. There is an amusing S.D. in F. *Sleepers Lye Still. Winde Hornes*, to prevent the sleepers taking this horn cue for that in 138 which does wake them.

IV. i. 219. *at her*; *her* is awkward; if correct, it means Thisbe's. We should perhaps read *after*.

V. i. 43, 47. *Centaurs*; Hercules fought the Centaurs; *Thracian singer*, the Maenads killed Orpheus.

V. i. 52. *The thrice three Muses*, etc.; a fairly certain allusion to the death in poverty, in September 1592, of Robert Greene, and perhaps also to Spenser's *Teares of the Muses* (1591).

V. i. 59. *strange* is both feeble in itself and disappoints the expectation of antithesis created by *bot*; of the many conjectures *flaming* (Orson) is perhaps the best.

V. i. 189. *Knit now again*; the Q reading, clearly corrupt. F reads *knit up in thee*, as good a guess as any.

V. i. 194-96. *Limander*, etc.; the errors are for Cephalus and Procris, and (possibly) Leander and Hero.

V. i. 204. *Moon used*; so Q. F reads *morall downe*; most editors adopt Pope's *mural down*; but as that is no more than an emendation of a conjecture, I prefer to leave the Q reading, little sense though it makes, partly because Demetrius' answer, with its natural emphasis on *walls*, suggests that Theseus was talking of something else.

V. i. 213. *beasts, in a man and a lion*; so Q; but Theobald's emendation is tempting, *beasts in, a man and a lion*.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

V. i. 338. *No, I assure you*; Q gives this speech to Lion, F to Bottom. The difference probably indicates the difference between a performance with an 'inner-stage,' and one without. With an inner stage Lion, Moonshine (? and Wall) can re-enter to draw the curtain; without it the corpses must be resuscitated.

V. i. 406-7. It is usually assumed that these lines must obviously be transposed; I think a hasty assumption. If the lines are transposed one feels that the first ought to run 'So the owner . . .'; *i.e.* the consequence of the blessing should be indicated as such. The 'run' of the lines seems to me right as they stand, reading either '*Ever shall't in safety rest,*' or '*Ever shall it safely.*' Cf. *M.W.W.* V. v. 63-6.

Glossary

MANY words and phrases in Shakespeare require glossing, not because they are in themselves unfamiliar, but for the opposite reason, that Shakespeare uses in their Elizabethan and unfamiliar sense a large number of words which seem so familiar that there is no incentive to look for them in the glossary. It is hoped that a glossary arranged as below will make it easy to see at a glance what words and phrases in any particular scene require elucidation. A number of phrases are glossed by what seems to be, in their context, the modern equivalent rather than by lexicographical glosses on the words which compose them.

Act First

SCENE I

line

- 4 LINGERS, delays fulfilment of
- 5 DOWAGER, widow with life interest in an estate
- 13 PERT, open-hearted
- 32 STOLEN THE IMPRESSION OF HER FANTASY, imprinted thyself by stealth upon her fancy (E. K. Chambers)
- 33 GAWDS, jewels
- CONCRETS, fal-lals
- 45 IMMEDIATELY, specifically
- 54 IN THIS KIND, as a suitor
- VOICE, approval
- 60 CONCERN, affect
- 68 KNOW, take knowledge
- 70 LIVERY, habit

line

- 76 DISTILL'D, turned into perfume
- 80 PATENT, title
- 89 PROTEST, vow
- 98 ESTATE, make over
- 102 WITH VANTAGE, superior
- 105 PROSECUTE, pursue
- 106 TO HIS HEAD, to his face
- 120 EXTENUATE, mitigate
- 131 BETEEM, pour upon
- 137 MISGRAFFED, unsuitably grafted
- 143 MOMENTANY, momentary
- 155 FANCY, love
- 173 CARTHAGE QUEEN, Dido, who killed herself on her funeral pyre when deserted by Æneas
- 182 FAIR, fairness

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Act I Sc. i—continued

line	line
183 LODGE-STARS, guiding-stars	232 HOLDING NO QUANTITY, with no
184 TUNEABLE, tuneful	sense of proportion (<i>qualifying</i>
190 BATED, excepted	'Love')
191 TRANSLATED, transformed	

SCENE II

(*To gloss Bottom's blunders and 'derangements of epitaphs' is often impossible, and even where possible would only be distracting.*)

3 SCRIP, 'book' of the play	25 TEAR A CAT, rant
5 INTERLUDE, light entertainment	88 FRENCH CROWN, gold coin
after a banquet (<i>exact meaning disputed</i>)	90 CROWNS, <i>pun</i>
25 ERCELES, i.e. Hercules	98 BILL, list

Act Second

SCENE I

10 PENSIONERS, sovereign's body-guard	86 RINGLETS, round dances
12 FAVOURS, ornaments	91 PELTING, trifling
16 LOB, lubber	92 CONTINENTS, things containing
20 FELL, fierce	(i.e. banks)
30 SQUARE, engage in quarrel	97 MURRION, diseased
33 SHREWD, shrewish	98 NINE MEN'S MORRIS, the 'board'
36 QUERN, hand-mill for corn	(<i>marked out on the ground</i>) for
38 BARM, yeast-froth	a kind of open-air draughts
48 CRAB, crab-apple	99 QUAIN, cunning
56 NEEZE, sneeze	109 HIEMS, winter
66 CORIN } traditional pastoral	112 CHILDRING, fruitful
68 PHILLIDA } names	127 EMBARKED TRADERS, ? trading-
71 BUSKIN'D, with hunting-boots	ships with their freight
	164 FANCY-FREE, untouched by love

GLOSSARY

Act II Sc. i—continued

line		line	
192	WODE, mad (<i>Eliz. pronunciation like 'wood'</i>)	232	GRIFFIN, a winged monster (<i>eagle-lion</i>)
195	ADAMANT, magnet-stone	252	EGLANTINE, sweet-brier
214	IMPEACH, endanger		

SCENE II

4	RERE-MICE, bats	88	FOND, love-crazed
30	OUNCE, lynx	119	THE POINT OF HUMAN SKILL, fully matured discretion
31	PARD, leopard	134	ABUS'D, deceived
71	WEEDS, clothes	154	OF ALL LOVES, for any sake
86	DARKLING, in growing darkness		

Act Third

SCENE I

12	BY'R LAKIN, by our ladykin	141	GLEEK, quip
23	EIGHT AND SIX, <i>sc.</i> syllables (<i>a common ballad (and hymn) metre</i>)	160	DEWBERRIES, black- (<i>or ?</i> goose-) berries
74	TOWARD, afoot	168	DO HIM COURTESIES, curtesy to him
113	TRANSLATED, transformed	180	SQUASH, unripe pea-pod
119	OUSEL, black-bird	181	PEASCOD, peapod
122	QUILL, voice	194	ENFORCED, violated
129	SET HIS WIT, pay attention		

SCENE II

5	NIGHT-RULE, 'order of the night'	36	LATCH'D, <i>either</i> closed <i>or</i> moistened
9	PATCHES, ragged folk	70	TOUCH, achievement
	MECHANICALS, craftsmen	74	ON A MISPRIS'D MOOD, in a mood of misunderstanding
17	NOLE, head	90	MISPRISION, misunderstanding
30	YIELDERS, people giving them up easily		

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Act III Sc. ii—continued

<i>line</i>		<i>line</i>	
114	FOND PAGEANT, ridiculous antics	329	KNOT-GRASS, a plant an infusion of which was supposed to stunt growth
141	TAURUS, a mountain-range in Asia Minor	339	COIL, ado
175	ABY, purchase	344	AMAZ'D, dumbfounded
178	APPREHENSION, perception	356	WELKIN, sky
188	OES, circles	357	ACHERON, a river of Hell
203	ARTIFICIAL, creative	373	DATE, term
260	HANG OFF, stop hanging on	412	MANHOOD, proof of manhood
302	RIGHT, true FOR, in		

Act Fourth

SCENE I

2	COY, caress	105	VAWARD, vanguard
16	OVERFLOWN, over-flooded	120	FLEW'D, with hanging chaps SANDED, sandy-coloured
20	NEAF, 'fist'	153	WITHOUT, outside
30	TONGS AND THE BONES, rude rural music	167	IDLE GAUD, trifling ornament
34	BOTTLE, bundle	210	PATCHED, motley
95	SAD, solemn		

SCENE II

37 PREFERR'D, 'on the short list'

Act Fifth

SCENE I

1	THAT, what	17	LOCAL, localised
3	TOYS, trifles	25	MORE WITNESSETH THAN FANCY'S IMAGES, gives evidence of more than mere imagination
5	APPREHEND, are aware of		
11	BROW OF EYGPT, i.e. a gipsy		

GLOSSARY

Act V Sc. i—continued

line		line	
26	CONSTANCY, coherency	232	HORNS ON HIS HEAD, the symbol of cuckoldry
27	HOWSOEVER, none the less	276	THRUM, the ends of the wrap which are attached to the loom
30	MORE, <i>sc.</i> joy	300	ASS, <i>pun on 'ace'</i>
32	MASQUES, a theatrical entertain- ment with music	307	MOTH, mote
39	ABRIDGEMENT, entertainment	311	VIDELICET, viz.
42	BRIEF, list	340	BERGOMASK DANCE, a rustic dance (<i>from Bergamo, a sup- posedly Boeotian province of Venice</i>)
80	EXTREMELY STRETCH'D, strained to their limit	353	OVERWATCH'D, been awake too long
86	HIS, its	361	FORDONE, worn out
96	PERIODS, full-stops	374	FROLIC, frolicsome
101	MODESTY, shyness	402	CONSECRATE, consecrated
	FEARFUL, timid	415	NO MORE YIELDING BUT, produc- ing no more than
106	ADDRESS'D, ready		
118	POINTS, punctuation		
123	RECORDER, a flute-like instru- ment played vertically		
180	BEING SENSIBLE, having senses		

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